

14. ANTS (*CAMPONOTUS* SP.) HUNTING FLIES

On 20th June 1975, we observed an uncommon event. We were staying overnight at a tourist bungalow at the Borivli National Park, Bombay and while sitting on the verandah steps in the evening, we saw some black ants carrying flies. Every few seconds a new ant would appear with a lifeless fly. On tracking the line of ants, we discovered that the flies carried by the ants were not dead ones found by chance, but that the ants were systematically hunting flies. As the ground was moist and dirty, plenty of flies were hovering around, often landing and remaining on the ground for some time. The ants wandering about were pouncing on any fly within striking distance. Although the percentage of successful strikes was low, the frequency of strikes and the large number of ants ensured that every 30 seconds or so, at least one ant would get its prey. After striking and capturing the fly, the ant would bend into a 'U'

so as to make its abdomen touch the fly. This was probably to inject some venom from its sting. After this the fly would stop struggling and would be carried off. Sometimes a fly was seen to escape the clutches of the ant, even after capture. The ants had their nest in a hole in the ground beside the wall of the house. There were two sizes of ants indulging in this hunting. One ant was observed to hunt in a different way. It would remain motionless in one place, (it was seen on a banana peel) and let the flies come near. Whenever a fly came too close, it would jump on it and try to catch it. This behaviour was observed on two separate days at the same place. Ants are known to hunt and kill other insects and even bigger animals are taken by army ants. But for an individual ant to hunt so agile a creature as a fly seemed unusual and uncommon. The flies were certainly in good health and perfectly capable of flying.

13/A, AVANTI APARTMENTS,  
SION (EAST),  
BOMBAY-400 022,  
February 2, 1979.

SHAILESH J. ZAVERI  
JYOTINDRA J. ZAVERI  
AMEET K. ZAVERI

15. COLOUR DURING LIFE OF THE CRAB *ATERGATIS*  
*ROSEUS* (RUPPELL)

The Xanthid walking crab *Atergatis roseus* (Ruppell) had been recorded by me, from collections made at Port Okha by my colleagues in the Department of Fisheries in the erstwhile Bombay State (Chhapgar, 1957, *JBNHS* 54, pages 426, 427). The crabs in that collection had been received by me preserved in formalin, and were seen to be of the colour of rose flowers; the trivial name *roseus* thus

aptly describes the body coloration.

Subsequently I have had the opportunity to observe freshly collected crabs of this species; these had a brick-red body coloration quite similar to that of *Atergatis integerrimus* (Lamarck). However, while the latter has white pits on the carapace—sparsely distributed all over the outer hepatic, and the epi-, meso- and meta-branchial regions, the carapace in *A.*

*roseus* is uniformly brick-red except for an ivory-white border.

Incidentally, Alcock (1898, *Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal* 67, page 97), describing the coloration of *A. roseus* recorded from Madras

E-31, CUSROW BAUG,  
COLABA CAUSEWAY,  
BOMBAY-400 039,  
March 15, 1979.

and Karachi, gives it as "Colours in spirit brownish yellow." On the contrary, he has described the colours in spirit of *A. integririmus* as "pinkish ochre."

B. F. CHHAPGAR

#### 16. NEW RECORDS OF EUPHORBIACEAE FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Among trees and shrubs enumerated by Biscoe (1910), 8 genera and 12 species of Euphorbiaceae were recorded from the erstwhile Indore State; while among weeds, Kenoyer (1924), reported 4 genera and 9 species of this family from the former princely state of Gwalior and adjacent parts. After reorganisation of states the floristic composition of Madhya Pradesh has been assessed and evaluated by Heweston (1951), Sagreiya and Singh (1958), Tiwari (1968) and Khan (1973).

Panigrahi and Prasad (1967) reported 23 genera and 47 species of Euphorbiaceae from Madhya Pradesh, while 14 genera and 27 spe-

cies have been described by Kaushik (1969, 1974) from Shivpuri (M.P.). Recently a few more have been added by Oommachan (1973) and Javed (1975) from Bhopal, but none of these authors have included the following plants in their respective works.

(1) *Euphorbia microphylla* Heyne, (2) *E. trigona* How., (3) *Jatropha podagrica* Hook., (4) *Pedilanthus japonica* Hook., (5) *Phyllanthus nivosus* Bull and (6) *Synadenium grantii* Hook.

Thus these 6 species belonging to 5 different genera collected from Bhopal are new records from Madhya Pradesh as a whole.

DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY,  
SAIFIA COLLEGE,  
BHOPAL (M.P.) 462 001,  
September 23, 1976.

S. A. CHAGHTAI  
ARUNA GARG

#### REFERENCES

BISCOE, W. F. (1910): A List of Trees and Shrubs of the Indore State, Times Press, Bombay: 71-75.

HEWESTON, C. E. (1951): Preparation of a Flora for Madhya Pradesh and Central Parts of Indian Union. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 50: 431-433.

JAVED, A. (1975): A Study of the Medicinal

Trees of Bhopal. M.Sc. Thesis. Bhopal University. (Unpublished).

KAUSHIK, J. P. (1969): A Contribution to the Flora of Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh. *Bull. Bot. Survv. India*, II, (1 & 2): 51-69.

————— (1974): Some Plants from Shivpuri District, Madhya Pradesh. *J. Jiwaji Univ.* II, (1): 58-64.